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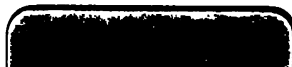
IS  
SYMBOLISM  
SUITED TO THE SPIRIT OF  
THE AGE?

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IS SYMBOLISM SUITED  
TO  
THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE?

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" Yet Nature is made better by no mean  
But Nature makes that mean : so, o'er that Art  
Which you say adds to Nature, is an Art  
That Nature makes."

~~~~~  
WINTER'S TALE.



~~~~~  
BY  
WILLIAM WHITE.

LONDON :  
THOMAS BOSWORTH, 215, REGENT STREET.  
1854.

141. b. 239.

**LONDON :**

**G. J. PALMER, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.**

## PREFACE.

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THE tints of Nature with their endless variety and unceasing change, from the brightest glow of summer to the dullest gloom of winter, are not more various than the minds of men. The rich wood and the leafless plain do not present a contrast more striking than that which is continually seen between different members even of the same community. In Nature all is beautiful, and much of her beauty arises from diversity and contrast of tone and hue. Where her most brilliant hues are relieved by masses of dark shade, or her grey mantle is lighted up with bright gleams, there is her greatest beauty found; it is not in the dull monotony of middle shade, though so much of middle shade does enter into the composition of every scene. Amongst men it



is the same. One man is as it were all spirit—visionary, unpractical, blind to what is going on around him in the world, he lives in a world of his own; to him the earth and things of earth are but mere shadows:—another is taken up wholly with the visible world, and what is generally called “plain matter of fact,” to the exclusion of all that is spiritual—he seems to regard creation as consisting only in those things which his hands can handle and his eyes can see, and to look upon such things as appeal to the imagination or inner perception of man as imaginary and unreal. Yet every one occupies his own appointed place, and like “each little drop by leaf and flow’ret worn,” helps to form one beauteous harmonious whole.

And as in Nature, so in Nature’s imitator, Art: without diversity and contrast any life-like and vigorous effect is unattainable, and we should instinctively turn from the dull picture, in which a neutral hue pervades the whole landscape, to that in which the glories of the setting sun are enhanced and brightened by a dark rocky foreground, or the grandeur of the storm increased by the contrast of the rainbow arch against the black thunder-cloud.

But Nature not only furnishes enjoyment to almost every one, of whatsoever temperament he may be, but also softens and subdues him, by calling into action those faculties and affections which place man above the level of the brutè creation. So also Art makes some provision for all, according to the diversity of their several dispositions and habits of mind; and she, like Nature, not only accommodates herself to the likings and needs, but also elevates and refines the minds, of all. Still, as there are some to whom Nature even in her outward aspect is a dead letter, so there will ever be found those who, caring neither for expression nor spirit in works of Art, will regard the study of *any* of its principles as the pursuit of a vision or a dream. It is not, of course, for these that the following pages are intended; but rather for those who, having a love for Art in itself, and taking delight in the scientific principles upon which it rests, already view it as a means of intellectual and moral elevation; and who doubt whether it might not also be made an instrument for teaching the truths of Revelation and for addressing the inner spirit of the Christian. They are meant too for those persons who themselves believing in the possibility of this, and

seeking after all fit and proper aids towards realising the existence and presence of things unseen, would wish to make out how far such a system is either necessary or expedient for those who live in such an enlightened and inquiring age as the nineteenth century.

## IS SYMBOLISM SUITED TO THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE?

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It seems to be generally taken for granted by those who write about Symbolism, that Symbolism is true and good in itself, and that there must of necessity result from its study and use, a large amount of practical benefit. In these inquiring days, however, men are not disposed to take upon trust any teaching or theory which is supposed to have originated in the mere caprice or opinion of men, however implicitly they may have done so in a more ignorant or illiterate age. This is especially the case with Symbolism; for whilst some attach to it great value and importance as containing within itself a deep fund of religious teaching, others regard it as altogether vain and fanciful, and likely to lead men to materialism and superstition. And if, in the course of our inquiry, it should appear that Symbolism had its rise in fancy and passing opinion, or that it rests upon these as its foundations, we may safely conclude, that whatever advantages it may have had

in former and less enlightened ages, it is not suited to the spirit of the present. If, however, on the contrary, we should see reason for believing that its roots are firmly fixed in the very depths of human nature, and that merely its outward fashion and form are changed with the change of times, then, and then alone, it must be confessed that Symbolism has a claim upon every age and every land. And if this should prove to be the case, the wisdom of reviving it must be considered with reference to expediency, its practical results, and other external circumstances connected with it.

To arrive at any satisfactory solution of these questions, it will be necessary to consider the nature of Symbolism, its offices, and its supposed advantages, taking into account all the dangers and disadvantages arising from its liability to abuse and misuse; and, as a great deal can certainly be said in its favour, it will be well first to treat of it as free from objection, bringing forward all that has been or may be urged by its supporters, and then to consider afterwards the nature and the weight of the arguments against it.

Symbolism has been defined as "the having something in common with another by representative quality." It is not meant that this "something" is necessarily of the same nature with its counterpart, but that it has an im-

mediate and real correspondence with it. And thus it does not consist in merely "applying certain significations, ingeniously devised, to certain forms arbitrarily chosen,"\* but in an *innate* harmony existing between the symbol and the thing symbolised. Questions having been raised as to the correctness of this definition, and as to the nature and office of Symbolism, it may be well to state more at length the view of it here supposed. Symbolism, then, is regarded as the endeavour to discover and carry out in works of Art the same system of spiritual teaching which is found in the works of Nature; and according to this account of it, Symbolism may be called exactly analagous to the spiritual teaching of Nature; the difference being that the latter is the voice of God in His works; the former, the expression of spiritual truths in the works of man.

Now that the works of *Nature* have an inner meaning cannot be denied; it is acknowledged on all sides; and many writers have furnished us with valuable aids in drawing forth this divine instruction from her treasures. The tracing out of such meanings forms one of the most valuable and attractive features of the "Christian Year," and has gained for it many thousands of readers; for, whilst some few, who could not enter into the "soul of Nature," have regarded this book as

\* Trench.

dreamy and unintelligible,—the whole of Nature being to them alike meaningless; to others, who have ears to hear, all her works are therein heard to proclaim with one voice, “that the things of earth are copies of things in heaven.” For happily there are but few who, when their attention is called to it, fail to see that Nature does abound in deep and hidden meanings, and that, as Mr Trench, in his “Notes on the Parables,” appropriately expresses it, “There is a harmony unconsciously felt by all men, and by deeper minds continually recognised and plainly perceived, between the natural and spiritual worlds. All lovers of truth readily acknowledge these mysterious harmonies, and the force of the arguments to be derived from them.” So, likewise, says St. Basil (as quoted by Archdeacon Wilberforce), “It must be borne in mind, that earth and things human are borrowed and derivative; that which is self-existent and primitive being those heavenly realities from which things worldly have their origin.”

And not only our own intuitive perception, but Holy Scripture itself, as well by its figurative language as by its symbolical allusions, recognises this mysterious connection; indeed the applications of it made in its pages are to every one perfectly familiar and “natural.” For instance, if the Psalmist speaks of the godly man, it is under the figure of a “*tree planted by the water-side*—whose

*leaf shall not wither,—and who shall bring forth his fruit in due season;”* and in the same manner he speaks of the ungodly—as “the *chaff* which the *wind scattereth away from the face of the earth.*” In his deep affliction he calls upon God to save him from the *overwhelming water-flood*, to take him up out of the *horrible pit*, and out of the *mire and clay*, and to set his *feet* upon the *Rock*, and to order his *goings*; he compares the words of his cunning and cruel enemies to the *smoothness of oil*, the *poison of asps*, the *tongues of serpents*, and the *piercings of sharp swords*; and then he addresses Him Who is mighty to save, as his *castle*, his *stronghold*, his *house of defence*, his *fortress*, his *shield*, his *buckler*, his *horn of salvation*, and his *place of refuge*; exhorting the righteous to rejoice before Him, because “He is a Father of the fatherless, and *defendeth the cause* of the widows;—He bringeth the *prisoners* out of *captivity*,—and He sent a *gracious rain* upon his *inheritance*, *refreshing* it when it was *weary.*” The prophet Isaiah, also, says, “A man shall be as an *hiding place* from the *wind*, and a *covert* from the *tempest*; as *rivers of water* in a *dry place*; as the *shadow* of a *great rock* in a *weary land*. Every *valley* shall be *exalted*, and every *mountain* and *hill* shall be *made low*; and the *crooked* shall be *made straight*, and the *rough places plain*. All *flesh* is *grass*, and all the *good-*



ness thereof is as the *flower of the field* : the *grass withereth* and the *flower fadeth* : because the Spirit of the Lord *bloweth upon it* : surely the people is *grass*. The *grass withereth*, the *flower fadeth* : but the word of our God shall *stand* for ever." And again, "He shall *grow up* before Him as a *tender plant*, and as a *root* out of a *dry ground* ; He is brought as a *lamb* to the *slaughter*, and as a *sheep* before her *shearers* is *dumb*, so He openeth not his mouth." Again, when our Lord speaks of himself, it is generally under some image of the same kind : "I am the *true vine* ;—I am the *door* of the *sheep* ;—I am the *root* and the *offspring* of David, the *bright and morning star* ;" "the *Alpha* and *Omega*," "the *beginning* and the *end*," and have "the *keys* of hell and of death." And throughout the whole of Scripture language we find images taken from Nature, used to signify spiritual truths. Inasmuch then as the expressions of Scripture and of Nature proceed from one and the self same Author, whose works were known to Him from the foundation of the world, this may lead us to believe that those natural objects were from the beginning intended for such purpose ; and *were not merely found suitable*, and so adapted to it. Thus it was evidently intended that the birth of man in the likeness of the father that begat him, should speak to us of his regeneration or new birth after the image of Him

that created him,—the increase of youth and manhood, of spiritual Growth,—sleeping and waking, of Death and Resurrection,—social intercourse, of the Communion of Saints,—eating and drinking, of the Bread and Water of Life,—toilsome journeys, of the path of Life,—falls and bruises, of Sins and Infirmities,—every spot that stains the hand or soils the garment, of the pollution we are continually gathering by sin,—the face of Nature, of the Kingdom of Heaven. Perhaps the most familiar figure is that of the natural day taken for man's term of life,—the freshness and vigour of early morning, the scorching heat of noon, the weariness and calm of evening, the silent darkness of night. This image has been lately made\* the subject of a sermon upon one who was called away in the prime of life, whose light shone brightly for a little while in her lowly home, and then disappeared. The simple text, “Her *sun* has *gone down* while it was yet *day*,” was made to speak with a voice both of encouragement and warning, most appropriate and striking. St. Paul himself tells us that external figures *were meant* to be our instructors in spiritual truths, as for instance, when speaking of covering the head in worship, he says (1. Cor. xi.), “Does not *even nature itself teach you*, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her, for her

\* By the late Rev. R. Suckling.

hair is given her for a covering [or veil]." This same truth which the Apostle here teaches in a particular case, is also more generally alluded to in other places: "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made."\* And when we meet with such allusions to natural objects, as wind, fire, water, corn, wine, oil, the palm, the vine, and the fig, the lily, the rose, and the grass of the field, there can be no mistaking their peculiar correspondence with, and fitness to represent, the ideas and meanings attached to them in Holy Scripture.

We not only find this mysterious connection between the inner and outer worlds thus recognised, and the purport of that connection declared, but many such figures are picked out, and especially appropriated, by Divine command, to be the types of great facts in the history of the Church, and of the fundamental truths of Revelation; both in the Patriarchal and Jewish Churches types abounded every where, indeed the teaching of these two dispensations was typical and figurative throughout,—typical of something to be hereafter fulfilled in the person and Church of Christ, in the Christian Church. The garden of Eden, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; the deluge, the ark, the priesthood of Melchisedek, the call of Abraham, the sign of

\* Rom. i. 20.

circumcision, the Egyptian bondage, the Exodus, the passage of the Red Sea, the ark of the covenant, the tabernacle, the temple, the daily sacrifice, the law, the priesthood and ordinances,—all these were typical of what was afterwards to be given in antitype: and when our Lord came upon earth, they were fulfilled in the Gospel dispensation, when also the law ceased.

But, when the Law was abolished, figurative teaching did not cease with it; for we find it used throughout the whole of the New Testament. The Law was indeed fulfilled, but we are not yet come to the heavenly haven, the spiritual Jerusalem. Though spiritualised, all is earthly as before, and bears the impress of something yet to come. “We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”\* Teaching by signs and symbols was still left to us, telling us of realities, present and future, in the eternal world; as the types of the Jewish system taught the realities of the Christian scheme, all of which alike will have their proper fulfilment only in heaven.

But further; our Lord intends *us* to receive divine instruction, and not instruction only in heavenly things, but the very grace of heaven is intended by Him to be conveyed to us by symbols,

\* 2 Cor. v. 1.

as we see from His own institution of the Holy Mysteries. For the elements, which represent to us heavenly things, are really and essentially *symbols*, as well as means whereby those divine things are verily and indeed communicated to the faithful receiver. Thus, also by the word of inspiration, we are taught to discern in water a figure of spiritual washing; in oil, the anointing of the Holy Ghost; in the dove, a symbol of the same blessed Spirit; in the lamb, our true sacrifice; and, in like manner, (independently of those more arbitrary forms which people have, from time to time and by common consent, framed to be the expression of ideas in their social intercourse, their civil relations, or their religious observances), certain forms or bodily acts have a recognised spiritual signification: for instance kneeling, of humility; standing, of steadfastness; bowing, of obeisance; laying on of hands, of the transmission or delegation of power and authority; and this clearly from an inherent law of nature, as is evinced by some such acts being the universal practice of all ages and nations, and regarded as natural by implication of Holy Scripture.

It appears then, that in all these things, an element of spiritual teaching was, at the creation, purposely superadded to, and interwoven with, the physical ends of created things. But the old and

recognised definition of Art is that it is an *imitating* of Nature; not, as some suppose, because artificial objects are necessarily *imitations* of natural objects, but because the process of Art is in itself a following of the process (and not merely the expressions) of Nature: or in other words, that our finite creative power (which is Art) is an image of the infinite creating power which works in Nature. Therefore (seeing that we should here also follow the outlines of the original figure), man in his creations may lawfully superadd an element of spiritual teaching to the physical ends which are the direct objects of his designs; and this is—Symbolism.

We see, therefore, by an analogy of natural things what the nature of Symbolism is, and that it is allowable in works of Art, especially architecture; for this also we have positive confirmation from Holy Scripture:—First, in the tabernacle in the wilderness, which was to be the type of the future Church, and to which St. Paul alludes in his epistle to the Hebrews. After speaking of the “Priests that offer gifts according to the law; *who serve unto an example of heavenly things*,” he immediately adds, “As Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle; for, see, saith he, thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount.” And next in the temple of Solomon: though this

temple was of small dimensions, yet it was exceeding rich and curious, in regard both of material and workmanship, whereof every part was made in exact accordance with particular directions given by God Himself; and hence there must be in each detail a significant meaning embodied, which was intended to be conveyed to the hearts and minds of His people. And the New Testament fully bears out the conclusion that such teaching did not end with the Jewish dispensation; for in the Revelation of St. John, we are taught to contemplate the heavenly Jerusalem under the figure of a "city of gold like unto pure glass, . . [whose] foundations were garnished with all manner of precious stones," and which is then minutely described. And St. Paul, again, after speaking of our earthly body being a figure of the spiritual body, leads us on, through stones and buildings, which are works of man's Art, to the contemplation of the spiritual building of the Church, of which our Lord Himself is the chief corner-stone, and we, in Him, living stones, cemented to one another in love.

Such then being the nature of Symbolism, and such the application of it according to the authority of Scripture, we now proceed to consider its offices and supposed uses. In that Symbolism embodies or expresses spiritual truths by material forms, (1) it may be made a means of conveying to

men's minds a lively and intelligible impression of such truths; and (2) it may remind men of these truths by objects which they continually see around them; so that wherever they go, and upon whatsoever their eye rests, something shall recall to their thoughts one or another of those realities in which man's truest and deepest interest lies.

Now that certain truths should be impressed on men by visible objects as well as by words, is advantageous on many accounts, partly because the eye as well as the ear, thus becomes a means of conveying instruction to the heart; and still more, because impressions received through the eye are more powerful in their effects, and more enduring, than the same received through the ear, according to the often quoted lines of Horace :

“Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem,  
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus, et quæ  
Ipse sibi tradit spectator.”

So natural is this feeling, that in a book or illustrated newspaper people generally turn first to the *pictures*, as giving more speedy information than the letter-press; and they have the occurrence of events more firmly and permanently fixed upon their memories from *them*, than they would have had from merely hearing or reading the written account which the pictures were introduced to illustrate. Then, again, earthly objects which take the eye naturally lead the thoughts to earthly



things. Often does some apparently slight object, or trivial circumstance, recall to our minds things that had long escaped our memory; or, as every one must know by his own experience, suggest some train of thought with which the particular object has no immediate connexion; how much more then, to a mind under the influence of previous intention and habit, shall not forms, such as are usually termed symbolical, suggest thoughts profitable to spiritual edification; especially where these forms have, in their very nature, a real connection with such spiritual meaning?

Moreover, our bodily senses were given us for higher ends than the mere preservation or refreshment of animal life, or even than the attainment of pleasure derivable from the pursuit of knowledge. It highly concerns us, therefore, to turn these senses to the best account, and it is no small gain to us to find good employment for any of them at such times as they are not otherwise actively engaged: and sight having been made the most acute, valuable, and active of our bodily senses,—the one which in our waking life is scarcely a single moment unemployed,—it seems fair to infer that the ends for which it was designed, and the truths which it was intended to convey, are of the utmost importance to our truest welfare.

In the outward world at large such a spirit as that which dictated Jones's "Book of Nature" does enable men to turn to good account all

visible objects; and in Art man's instinctive appreciation of the beautiful would seem to be a dispensation of Providence, affording an inducement to the Artist to make all his works such as to minister to this end. This especially applies to the field of Sacred Art. Great are the difficulties of disciplining and restraining the thoughts at all times. Habits of thought, like other habits, can be formed and reduced to order only by rule and discipline; and men may be at times slow in forming good and overcoming evil habits, from mere neglect, or possibly from want of something to remind them, from time to time, of their duty; and hence arises the value of our being able to place some object in such a position as to meet the eye at the moment of temptation, to remind us of duties which we are otherwise apt to neglect or delay through mere forgetfulness. But above all other times and places men have most need to look to their thoughts when they go to church, where, from the nature of the case, they are for the time cut off from natural teaching; yet still they need to be reminded of Him Who is ever present "where two or three are gathered together in His Name," and of the nearness of that presence, lest they go before Him with careless, or it may be, irreverent, behaviour, and "with a mind beating upon the things of this world."\*

\* Dean Comber.

wander, and the eye ministers to the mind. Sacred Art, then, should try, by supplying the place of natural objects, to meet this failing and provide against it through the eye; and this it *can do*, for that which possesses real beauty always attracts the eye more readily than that which lacks it, and in real beauty there is always something elevating and ennobling, as well as pleasing and attractive, independently of all inner meaning which it may have; much more then when beautiful forms contain a meaning beneath the outward expression will they be truly valuable for the purposes of moral instruction. And this is the office of Symbolism; through it we may have continually presented to the eye objects fitted to excite in us feelings of reverence and humility, or stir us up to the exercise of diligence or zeal, penitence or patience, faith, hope, or love. And, as most men need some external helps to attention and to devotion, whilst all are more or less affected by external objects, the value of these, if in themselves good and proper, is very great.

There are too, other grounds upon which those who desire to make the best use of their Christian privileges will adopt the use of Symbolism. As Christians our greatest and highest privileges consist in holding communion with Him Who is our Head, and with those who are of His kingdom; therefore all lawful means to this end will be

thankfully and diligently used. We naturally treasure up any memorial of an absent or departed friend; and perhaps the memorial which is most valued is the one that best recalls some particular trait of character, which in our personal intercourse we most loved or admired. By such memorials our interest in them and regard for them, may be continually revived, or our sense of separation from them relieved; and, thus such memorials become even a means of holding a sort of communion with them in spirit, though absent in body. Nor is a feeling which bids us thus to walk amongst home scenes and familiar faces, a wild fancy, or a fond delusion, but it is rather an instinct implanted within us in order to bind us more closely to those whom we love.

Now may not a higher exercise of this same feeling lead men to learn what they can of Symbolism? for through a proper use of such knowledge we are enabled to keep perpetually before us some phase of the heavenly kingdom, and to realise more truly the presence of God and the Communion of Saints; and as we like to dwell upon a picture or anything which reminds us of one whom we esteem,—may not a religious mind love to linger upon such symbols, for instance, as bring before it the love and majesty of a Divine Head, Who came on earth to live, and die, and rise again for us? That it is thus natural to us

to connect deep spiritual truths with outward symbols is plainly proved by the actual practice of those who, whilst they most oppose it in theory, themselves *unconsciously* adopt it as a ready and capable means of expressing deep feeling; and this at too solemn a time for any one to doubt that it is really meant as a genuine expression of such feeling. For what other reason can there be for these very persons using urns, inverted torches, weeping cupids, and broken columns over the remains of the departed? It is true that these symbols are more fitted for Pagan than for Christian use, speaking as they do of nothing but the extinction of life, blighted hopes, the rending of earthly affections, and the speedy termination of a great or useful career, whilst true Christian feeling would suggest something that spoke of union with Christ, of the sleep of peace, of the guardianship of angels, of the communion of saints, or of hopes of a resurrection to immortality. Still, the fact of such things being used at all remains, nor can this originate from any other source than from that feeling in our nature which Symbolism was intended to satisfy. Must not then the love of Symbolism have some deep root in the human heart, when even those who look with dread and suspicion on any desire to use it to teach the verities of the Christian Religion, regard such poor symbols with admiration, as faith-

ful and instructive monitors, uttering great truths, and leading the spectator to the contemplation of them ?

And this spirit of Symbolism seems to have been universally spread throughout the world ; it is said that even the mystical or mythological form among the Greeks and Romans, and other heathen nations, was derived from the form of religious instruction in the Patriarchal Church, and set up against it as a rival. "It pleased God to prefigure the mysteries of our faith from the beginning of the world by an emblematic ritual ; this manner, therefore, the heathen would necessarily carry off with them ; and when they changed the object of their worship, and departed from the Creator to the creature, they still retained the mystical form, and applied it to the worship of the elements of the world. Because the true God taught the people by mystical representation, they truly would have their mysteries too . . . and this is the true origin of the fabulous style in the Greek mythology."\* Of this sort is the well known riddle of the Sphynx, which refers to the several periods of man's ordinary life. Many of their myths have such a resemblance to the doctrines of the true religion as to show the source from whence they were derived : for instance, the personification of the deities which presided over

\* Jones of Nayland.

mortals and directed their fate, must have had its rise in a knowledge of the superintending providence of God and of the agency of ministering spirits. And from the particular application of emblems in representing their gods, and from the introduction of them into their temples, we may presume that they employed this sort of Symbolism generally in their Sculpture and Architecture. According to the accounts given by those who have investigated the matter, the same spirit is also carried out in the rude Art still existing in the Druidical remains of our own country.

Was it not this same intuitive love of Symbolism which dictated very many of the forms and signs employed at the obsequies of the late Duke, "to commemorate the loss of a true man, over whom millions mourn?" And truly they were most expressive of the ideas to be conveyed. That powerful leader and exponent of popular feeling and opinion, "The Times," in its interesting account of the lying in state and funeral-procession, speaks of the whole affair as "one of the formal modes of exhibiting the public sentiment on the occasion of the death of so great a man." . . . "The arrangements must, as such, give great satisfaction. They leave upon the mind of the visitor an impression of solemnity blended with gratified emotions. Around his coffin, and on either hand as you approach it, the symbols of that national

greatness, which he did so much to extend and consolidate, appear. The royal standard and arms and British flag blend with the other decorations; heraldic escutcheons and devices illustrate the high estate of that ancient aristocracy to which he belonged; the open chapel, hung with tattered trophies of battle, speaks of an historical and religious people; and the stately form of the soldiers, who, like statues, line the walls, shows that the warlike spirit of the country is not buried in the coffin of her greatest commander. His eight field-marshal's *bâtons*, displayed under the flags of the different nations that conferred them on him, and his twenty-seven orders and decorations of honour, all arranged around his coffin, speak sufficiently what he was, and how he was appreciated in his time. The victories won by our arms under his command, and the trophies which symbolise them belong to his country, and the national distribution of them in the chapel has been rendered as far as possible a part of the general spectacle."

And in the procession, "all branches of the service—Infantry, Cavalry, Artillery—were represented, to shew the full scope of the Commander-in-Chief's office, and of a Field Marshal's dignity. The victorious character of the deceased—his experience in war, and the length of days with which he had been blessed, are the next points illustrated; and to realise them to the mind the



eighty-three Chelsea pensioners, the enrolled pensioners, and the corps made up of single soldiers, from every regiment in the service, took part in it. The East India Company's service was also represented to show the wideness of the sphere to which the Duke's services had extended, and to recall the memory of those famous Eastern fields, on which he won his earliest laurels. . . . From the reminiscences of his military career, the symbolical significance of the funeral programme turn to less obtrusive, but hardly less interesting points. . . . The deputations and delegates belonging to our greatest corporate bodies, as representing the different orders of honour and merit, and the roll of ministers and great officers of state, culminate in the name of his Royal Highness Prince Albert, and to him succeed the *bâtons* and coronets won by the deceased—the rewards and emblems of his military genius." After the funeral, "the late Duke's controller, having broken in pieces his staff of office, handed it to the garter-king-at-arms, who cast it into the vault beneath."

"On this day business was suspended, crowds poured in to witness the spectacle, and to the one object of doing the thing worthily, all other considerations had given place. . . . The pageant went on its way, and has left an indestructible idea in near a million minds."

And in all these demonstrations it "cannot be said that London and all England were giving way to an infectious folly, or a constitutional infirmity; it was not madness, but an act of soberness and truth . . . for we are not a demonstrative people; we fall at once to calculation. We are admirers of the solid and substantial, and forget that solidity itself is also an empty show."

We have now considered the nature of symbolical teaching at large, and the use of it by all nations and classes; as regards its practical application in Christian Art, and its study for religious ends, each person for himself, when he is furnished with its leading principles and general outlines, will suit it to his own case in a better way than another can do for him: since, as a general rule, those thoughts which are the natural growth of our own hearts are of greater value than those which we receive from others. And though it is needful for all to learn in some degree what truth each form has usually been employed to represent, yet no general teaching will apply equally to all cases, or can all persons be expected to derive the same amount of benefit from it, but (to borrow a simile of St. Basil's, quoted by Mr. Williams in his "Christian Scholar") the most intent and diligent mind will gather from this study the best store of good, "like the bees, who are capable of extract-

ing honey from the flowers, though they furnish enjoyment to others so far only as to scent and colour; and thus also those who are not content merely to look for what is pleasant and profitable in them, may derive from them, and lay up in store, some profit for the good of their souls. Neither do the bees settle on all flowers alike, nor attempt to carry off everything from those on which they alight; and they have throughout but one end in view, and convert and assimilate all to that end alone." Their end, it is true, is but to make provision for their short-lived future, whilst ours is to "regard all things only as they conduce to the attainment of another life," and thus to lay up store in the treasure-house of heaven, against the coming winter of the grave.

It ought here to be observed, as regards the indefiniteness or apparent indistinctness of teaching through figure, that it was never intended mysteries *should* receive, or be capable of receiving full and definite explanation, or be lowered to the standard of human reasoning: they are meant for the benefit and instruction of those only who are otherwise fitted to receive them, and were not intended to be thrown indiscriminately amongst those who would use and those who would despise them. They are for the edification, not of the world, but of the Church; not of the intellect, but of the soul; not of the mere church-

goer or attendant upon outward ordinances, but for those who are striving to grow in spiritual life, and not resting in the bare observance only of the outward letter; and even to such persons mysteries were meant to remain *mysteries* still.

Jones of Nayland says that in speaking of and teaching spiritual things, figurative language must, from the very necessity of the case, be employed. In his Lectures on the figurative language of Scripture, he says, "There is a certain obscurity in the language of the Bible, which renders it difficult to be understood. There is something which common eyes cannot discern. This obscurity does not arise from the language or the grammar, but from the matter of which it treats, and the various forms under which that matter is delivered." And this simply because it "tells us of things that are not known to us by nature: . . . from the difficulty we are under of comprehending such things as are above natural reason," we cannot readily receive them. "Of all objects of sense we have ideas, and our minds and memories are stored with them. But of invisible things we have no ideas till they are pointed out to us by revelation; and as we cannot know them immediately, such as they are in themselves, after the manner in which we know sensible objects, they must be communicated to us by the mediation of such things as we already comprehend," and

hence "the Scripture hath a language of its own, which doth not consist of words, but of signs or figures taken from visible things. It could not otherwise treat of God, who is a Spirit, and of the spirit of man, and of a spiritual world, which no words can describe." "When any object is admitted into the mind, it must find a faculty there which corresponds with its own peculiar nature. When there is no appetite the sweeter meat is of no value . . . When there is neither ear nor skill in music, heavenly sounds give no delight ; and with the blind the beams of the sun give no beauty to the richest prospect. . . . On the hard and unfeeling heart the orator makes no impression. . . . Thus when God speaks of things which are above nature, his meaning must be received by a faculty which is not the gift of nature, but superadded to nature by the gift of God Himself. For spiritual truth there must be a spiritual sense ; and the Scripture calls this sense by the name of faith, . . . which is the 'gift of God,' wherever it is found." 'The great Apostle thus distinguishes between the language of revelation and the words of human wisdom : 'We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which none of the princes of this world knew.' . . . The word mystery, in a vulgar acceptation, is applied to such things as are dark and unintelligible ; but to speak in a mys-

tery, as the phrase is used in Scripture, it is to reveal some sacred and heavenly doctrine, under some outward and visible sign of it: and thus the sacraments of the Church, being outward signs with an inward and spiritual meaning, are also to be understood as mysteries. ‘This hidden wisdom’ of the Scripture is to be considered as treasure hid in the earth, for which man must search with that same zeal and labour with which they penetrate into a mine of gold. . . . This principle is inculcated . . . . when the divine law is compared to honey and the honeycomb, an inward sense being therein hidden, as when the bee seals up its treasure in the cells of wax: and the one when broken out is as sweet to the understanding as the other is to the palate.” But besides this figurative sense in the language of the Scripture, there is a plain and literal sense to which the Apostle gives the term of the *letter*, as to the other the contrary term of the *spirit*: “the letter of the Scripture is applied to the outward institutions and ceremonies of the law,” but “this was ordained only for the sake of its spirit or moral intention:” still when this interpretation is over-wrought, it is as destructive to truth as when it is explained too literally or definitively.

And as it is with the figurative language of Holy Scripture must it ever be with the figurative teaching of Art: indeed men run not

merely into unprofitable and absurd speculation, but into positive error when they attempt to make the teaching of external objects *complete*. Symbolism is as it were the poetry of material Art, and as such its primary object must not be to *teach*, but to impress and recall truths already known, and to set them forth in vivid colours; since, therefore, it ought to act on the heart rather than in the head, it ought to be pre-eminently suggestive, but not intrusive. This is the office of *poetry*; the poet must say enough to justify himself from being a mere dreamer, but he must allude to, and bring before the mind's eye far more than he speaks out. And this is one secret of the power of Symbolism upon men's minds. It produces an impression of the same sort as that which fills us with admiration and awe when we contemplate the sea or the sky. The little which we do see suggests an amount of unseen wonders which we can scarcely even imagine, and impresses us with a sense of the wonderful working of that Power which created them all, and made both the boundless heaven and the fathomless sea to speak of that Power. Its effect may likewise be compared to that of the breaking of bright gleams, through the grey mist, upon a distant scene: the morning vapours, as they float away, only half disclosing the rich expanse of hill and vale beyond,—affect men more than the pass-

ing at once into the same scene under the glare of a midday sun.

In this way Symbolism may furnish matter for many meditations; seeing that one symbol may express several truths, each of which will bring its own train of thoughts; and that on the contrary, one truth may be expressed by several symbols: for instance, our Lord may be symbolised by the Vine, the Lion, or the Lamb; and so likewise may be symbolised by Water, cleansing from sin, "the waves of this troublesome world," or the deep sleep of death.

Of what an infinity of thought may even water itself be suggestive, whether we contemplate it as filling the ocean, or ceaselessly flowing down in "the springs and rivers which run among the hills:"—whether we think of it in its vast extent, its motion and life, its obedience to the Sovereign command, "Here shall thy proud waves be stayed," "though they rage and swell, and though the mountains shake at the tempest of the same;"—or whether we regard it in its cleansing or refreshing nature (Eph. v. 26; Tit. iii. 5; Prov. xxv. 25; Isai. lv. 1); in its transparency, in its reflective power (Prov. xxvii. 19), or in any particular of its general usefulness to man.

And as it is with these symbols which we find ready provided to our hands, so will it be in the interpretation of those which belong more exclu-



sively to Art, of which it may be well to mention a few of the most ordinary and familiar examples.

When we pass a Church the very sight of it may speak to Christians of a common home, and cheer them with the thought that all are members of the same family, and heirs of the same hopes ; and tell them that as the fabric of a proper church is more splendid than that of men's habitation, so spiritual blessings are more glorious than those of earth. And well may we go on to contemplate the marvellous structure of that holy temple, the Catholic Church ! For, as in the outer so in the inner world, one defect helps to mar the fair beauty of the whole building ; one loose stone displaces others ; one goodly pillar supports a great number of wrought stones, and many of these are shaken by its sinking ever so little. The polished column firmly bears its superincumbent load, yet how insecure it would be if standing alone ! And again, uncomely as are the stones till they are built up into the structure, yet each has *there* its own appointed place, and contributes to the glory of the rest ; each one, indeed, is but poor and insignificant in itself, but full of grace and beauty when regarded as a portion of the mighty whole.

On entering the Porch they will be reminded of their Lord's saying, "I am the door of the sheep," and of the relation in which Christians stand to

Him; of their unworthiness and unfitness to be admitted, and of the impossibility of gaining admission to the heavenly kingdom but through Him, the Door. Then the font speaks of new-birth, and of being "buried with Him in baptism;" the nave, of the ark of Christ's Church; the aisles, of the extension of Christ's kingdom, when the building "should not be large enough to receive them;" the chancel, of those who are chosen out of the multitude "to minister about holy things;" the sanctuary, of the holiness required of those who draw near unto the Lord; the pillars, of the firm supporters of the faith; the arches, of the mutual support of all the brethren; the roof, of the "shelter from the blast, and covert from the tempest" without; the windows, of the light shed down from on high; the uniformity of fittings, of the perfect equality of all in His sight before whom we there appear; the turning all one way, oneness of heart and mind, the singleness of purpose and unity of profession in all who assemble there; the turning of the minister towards the people in reading and preaching, of his being the bearer of a message to them; the turning of the minister with them in prayer, of the offering with them of Common-Prayer to God.

And not the main features only, but every minute portion of the building may suggest something good; and a lesson may be learnt even from

the scraps of rich sculpture, which are sometimes observed in the gloom of a retired corner, or an unfrequented aisle. For, besides telling of the love and care which would not leave the unseen details of the building neglected, nor sacrifice them to an ostentatious display in its more conspicuous parts, they carry our thoughts to the handiwork of that great Artist who has clothed even the desolate portions of the earth with beauty, and has given to those which are most unfrequented and most inaccessible, birds and flowers, of sight and song, as cheerful and joyous as those in our own land :—

And oft, though far removed from human ken,  
 Fair Nature's fairest gems, in richest, rarest guise  
 Lend their unheeded lustre to the pathless glen ;  
 And there the feathered minstrels raise,  
 Unheard by man, their strains of praise,  
 In joyous accents to the silent skies.

Indeed Nature's most favoured spots seem to be but for the refreshment or delight of an occasional traveller : day after day she remains in the same undisturbed repose ; morning, noon, and night, pass over her, each imparting its own peculiar beauty ; apparently she spreads her charms in vain, except to the few who can for a little while retire from the ordinary scene of life for the sake of contemplating them. And men might almost be tempted to ask, "To what purpose is this

waste?" were it not that the profusion itself seems given us for a sign of the infinite perfection and love which is around us on every side, filling all space, though, upon the greater part of mankind, apparently lavished in vain. And even the minute finish of such hidden portions of a noble structure may be well compared to the lives and virtues of true Christians, or the intrinsic and far from superficial qualities to be discovered upon a more intimate acquaintance with them; for, though we were struck with admiration upon first entering the building, yet we may feel more real pleasure in the discovery and contemplation of these retiring or hidden features, than we derive from a better acquaintance with those which first caught our eye.

In like manner, particular forms, and proportions, colours and numbers, are suggestive of great truths. Indeed, the two latter have been ever considered to contain definite meanings when used in Holy Scripture, and were much referred to in the interpretation of it by writers of the Church in all ages: so that certain numbers and colours used to speak at once with a well-known signification to the mind of every Christian as well as to the Jews of old.

First, then, to speak of form and proportion; since a circle is suggestive of eternity, it may remind men of that time which shall never end, of

the ceaseless round of joy or woe which awaits them, and of their several interests in it and preparation for it; vertical lines, which are suggestive of activity, may admonish them of the diligence of the angels, and of their own sluggishness; height, which is suggestive of sublimity, tells of a higher world; and horizontal lines or breadth, which suggest repose, speak to them of Christian peace and tranquillity here and hereafter, of rest in this world and beyond the grave.

Then, as to numbers: "One," is symbolical of the one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, and of the One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in all: "Two," of our Lord's twofold nature: "Three," of the blessed Trinity, and thence may speak to men of the necessity of "holding the Catholic Faith:" "Four," of the Evangelists, of the holy Gospels, and of the visions vouchsafed to the favoured servants of God, such as those recorded in Ezekiel and the Revelation: "Five," of the number of the wounds which the Lord received for us at His crucifixion, and may hence remind men of His sufferings: or it may be a symbol of the number of the bodily senses, in each of which He suffered for our sakes, and each of which must be brought into subjection to His law, and employed in His service and to His glory: "Seven," of the gifts of the Holy Ghost; or the seven churches, sig-

nified in the Revelation by seven golden candlesticks; and so on, of many other numbers.

And of colours: Red, being a symbol of warmth, may remind men of that divine love, the fervent glow of which should fill their hearts; and still more may it speak to them of the sufferings of the Lord and of His martyrs, and of the reality and efficacy of His sacrifice: Green, on the other hand, the ordinary colour of the face of Nature, is a symbol of coolness or repose, and hence of the usual routine of daily duty, when uninterrupted by any festival: White symbolises cleanliness or purity, and hence speaks to us of the holiness of those who have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb:" Black, or Grey, is a fitting emblem of penitence or grief, and, as such, may speak to men of exclusion from the light of His countenance, from Whom they have fallen.

In the case of colours, visible things which are employed as suggestive of the truths they are commonly said to symbolise, have a natural influence, through the eye, upon the mind itself. Thus with colours, all men know the seriousness and gravity which black produces, the kind of excitement caused by the presence of red, and still more the soothing influences of green; so, too, it is a common thing for people to talk of the effect of a building as being solemn or gloomy, cheerful or depressing; or of an arrangement of colours as

being painful or pleasing ; or of a proportion being heavy or light, and so forth ; and, again, anything which bears an impress of majesty, mystery, or infinity, inspires men with feelings of humility, reverence and awe ; whilst things of mean or little character, and void of depth or meaning, are regarded with total indifference.

There is, however, one symbol which speaks with more power than any other, though it is now unhappily made, and always will be made above all others, a stumbling-block and word of reproach by the world, and even by some well meaning Christians. It is the material cross. The silent, secret, patient suffering, which is the portion of every true Christian, is by the Lord Himself represented by this sensible sign or form, and by being so represented is made more intelligible to our dull apprehensions. It is a symbol and a sign which, though it is one "that shall be spoken against," must ever be to Christians the memorial of His sacrifice and of their own duty. This sacred sign was held in such reverent esteem by the early Christians, that even in apostolic times their persecutors used it as a token of their faith or apostacy, by laying down a wooden cross before them and sparing the lives of those who would tread upon it. But now, whilst on the one hand it is sometimes spoken of with open contempt, or even reproach, by Christians themselves ; it is often, on

the other hand, and even by some who fancy they have a true reverence for it, irreverently treated in being converted into something that is worn for mere ornament or intended for some common use, as for handles, clasps, and pencil-cases. It is not meant that any one may shrink from the acknowledgment of that sign which our Lord has made the badge of his profession, merely from fear of what man may say or do, for we *must* confess Him "before men;" but the meek and lowly Christian, the true follower of Christ, will bear it with unobtrusive humility (thereby acknowledging his own unworthiness and his fear of being instrumental in bringing scandal to it), rather than make an obtrusive profession and parade of it, or turn it to common uses. And thus the secret wearing of the cross may be said to symbolise that cheerful and patient endurance of hidden suffering and unseen exercise of self-denial, which is far more acceptable to Him "Who seeth in secret," than the greater sacrifices of those who do their works "before men" though they verily "have their reward."

In addition to all these *material* symbols, certain forms or bodily acts having been made the means of embodying and expressing religious ideas or spiritual truths, approve themselves as symbols and similitudes suited to the celebration of the services of the Church. Of this sort are



the rites and ceremonies which pervade all parts of those services; and when men have learned properly to realise this truth, they will regard the services themselves in a very different way from what they did before: they will look upon each act as symbolising something done or to be done in heaven, even as they are plainly taught by the Lord Himself to regard the Holy Eucharist as symbolising "the marriage supper of the Lamb." Our churches and choral services will then speak to them of abiding mansions, of spiritual buildings, of angel choirs; the ministrations of God's servants at our altars will tell of the intercession of our great High Priest on high; the psalms and songs of his people here, of the new song of the redeemed; and the perfection of the musical services, of the harmony of the courts of heaven. And who that feel the feebleness of their own voice of praise will not anticipate the time when these imperfect harmonies shall be succeeded by more worthy strains?

Thus men will delight to dwell upon, and will be enabled in some sort to realise, the heavenly things themselves; and as truly as by the outward senses they convince themselves of the existence of material things, so they may, by such means, impress more deeply upon their own minds the truths which by faith they discern in spiritual things; and by a continual contemplation of them

may raise themselves above the desires of earth, and learn more and more to look upon things of the world as shadows which will shortly vanish away. It is not meant that time ought to be occupied in interpreting those symbols whilst men are engaged in their devotions, any more than they may at such times dwell upon the grammatical beauty or meaning of the prayers; but the general impression received, and the tone of mind springing from all, and pervading all, will be, that they are engaged in a service which is an image of one to come: that it is not merely for either *prayer* or preaching that they assemble together, but for WORSHIP, or the giving glory to God in its fullest sense; a truth which cannot be duly signified without a corresponding propriety of external forms where they may conveniently be had, any more than due honour can be paid to an earthly king without the splendours of a court.

But notwithstanding all this, it must not be forgotten that God is more worthily worshipped, and more truly honoured, by the sincere service of the pure and lowly in an humble cot, than by the sumptuous ritual of a mere formal or indevout worshipper in the most noble building. If the heart be right a man's offering is "accepted according to that he hath, and not according to that he hath not." (2 Cor. viii. 12; see also S. Mark xii. 41; and S. Luke xxi. 1.) This, however,

does not relieve those who *have it in their power* to do *much*, from the obligation they are under of so ordering all things, that they “may be done unto edifying,” and that men may feel they are outwardly, as well as inwardly, “worshipping God in the beauty of holiness.”

And therefore forms ought not to be such as to distract the attention or call men off from that which they are only meant to signify; nor must they be regarded otherwise than as utterly worthless in themselves;—yet they may be held of exceeding value for their significations’ sake; and hence men will prize them highly, and be very exact in the observance of them, from a sense of the end which they have in view; and they will proportionately desire all their churches, and all parts of their arrangement and services, to be such as shall be the best fitted for this end. They will earnestly strive for every constructional and ritual propriety, from the pinnacle to the foundation, from the porch to the altar, and rejoice in every opportunity afforded them of making the value of these things known to others also.

It is often said, moreover, that when due regard is paid to Symbolism in a church and its services, the general effect of the structure is more pleasing, and of the ritual more impressive, than when it is disregarded, even though the worshipper or

the spectator may be ignorant of the cause, or may not even be aware of the existence of the Symbolism. And, if true, this is a very remarkable fact, for it brings us back again to the analogy of Nature. It shows that people do feel the effect of Symbolism in the very same way that they feel the mysterious charms of Nature, without waiting to examine into, or contemplate the particular points of form, colour, or arrangement, from which her beauty springs; they are pleased, charmed, delighted, they know not why, they do not pause to consider. Nevertheless, such as these who only catch a passing glance at her treasures, do not derive from her so much pleasure, or so much profit, as those who study her more closely and enter into her very soul. And good Symbolism may in this respect be said to be pleasant to the eye, in the same way that good music is to the ear; those who are unversed in music dwell upon the sound and are refreshed and cheered, without entering into the elements of "thorough-bass" or the nature of the "chords," yet music reserves her richest stores for those who have made her their study and are acquainted with her laws.

Thus much may be said in favour of Symbolism; let us now turn to the other side, and consider the nature and weight of the objections against it.

The objections which concern us most are that it must necessarily lead towards materialism and superstition; that it must teach men to trust to external aids for that which can come only from within, and to rest in outward forms and ceremonies; to seek to satisfy the scruples of an uneasy conscience by a rigid observance of the letter, whilst they stifle the conviction that they "receive not the things of the Spirit of God" in truth; to feel more real delight in outward show than in "the still small voice" which speaks to the spirit of man.

Such, then, are the objections against Symbolism. Let us now consider their weight, which will not prove to be so great as it might at first sight appear; for the objections are such as apply only against the *abuse* of Symbolism, not against its proper use.

Experience proves but too plainly that Symbolism has its dangers, and this is especially in the case of those who take it up as an intellectual or scientific acquirement, who use it only as a pleasant exercise for an ingenious and inventive mind. Men have a tendency to rest upon what is immediately before them, and hence fail to look forwards to anything beyond that which may minister to present gratification or satisfy their pressing needs. Indeed, "all persons are apt to forget the end in the pursuit of the means, and especially in

those things that relate to their most important interests."\* They do not consider that this is to pluck the flower and leave no hope of fruit, much less of its future growth and ripening against the time of harvest. Again, Symbolism is (as we have seen) a means of conveying religious impressions to the mind, and the danger of repeatedly receiving religious impressions without acting upon them, or improving by them, is exceeding great. Those that are not the better for them are the worse. So, also, do they who talk or think of holy things in an irreverent or light way grow hardened to all sense of their awfulness: and many are they who, by constant and habitual handling of serious subjects, are led on to talk of the deepest mysteries without sufficiently considering the risk they are thus running. This danger is much underrated by men in bringing forward Church matters at the present day; the discussion of them is attractive and exciting, leading men to disclose and expose their most sacred thoughts and affections, subjecting them to the trivial remarks and rude observations of others, at the great risk, too, of self-deceit, and at the sacrifice of that reverence and reserve to which deep religious feeling instinctively clings. It is thus that

" — busy hands and an admiring ken  
Have blighted, ere its bloom, full many a rose."

\* Hussey.

It was thus that King Hezekiah's display, to the ambassadors sent by the King of Babylon, of all his treasures, his precious things, his silver and gold, his precious ointment, and his armour, was the forerunner of their being carried away and becoming the spoil of Jerusalem's enemies. When men's hearts are warmed, or their feelings excited by any association of holy things, they are apt to regard such feelings as their own, rather than His who inspired them for a far other purpose; they pride themselves in the possession of them till they lose sight of their proper use; by degrees they cease to be affected by them, and they are taken from them for ever.

And these considerations are such as must make men careful to regard Symbolism in its true light; and to treat it as it ought to be treated; to beware of idly discussing it, inviting as the subject is for conversation; to exercise reserve, not levity; humility, not ingenuity; and, above all, to use it in subservience to the highest ends, rather than those of mere caprice or fancy: for any one who misuses Symbolism, not only injures himself, but also inflicts a still greater injury upon the Church at large, and her members, by causing the thing itself to be evil spoken of when the fault rests only with those who use it amiss. Nothing is more calculated to bring principles, however important and true, into disrepute, than a noisy but

empty and lifeless profession of them, shewing that they may be held nominally, and without their having upon such as profess them, any practical influence for good. Hence, people ought not to judge of principles by the apparent effects produced upon a certain number of erring brethren, but by the effects seen in those who use the principles aright. No one would advise another to desist from reading the Scriptures because he failed to profit by them, but only to read more prayerfully, more diligently than ever. What then are the real tendencies of Symbolism? Some say that it will lead men astray, in one direction or another; but would it not be much more true to say that upon him who has any leaning towards materialism it will confer the power of spiritualising the objects of sense, and of realising more fully the presence of the unseen; and also that to him who is dreamy and unreal it must continually bring home the necessity of *matter* and physical aids for enabling him to express or to realise *any* ideas, however beautiful or true?

And if such as these be the proper effects of Symbolism, it can be no good excuse for neglecting the use of it to say that so many fail to see, or rather that so few are able to discern in Art, the hidden meanings that may be found beneath the forms presented to the eye. For in Nature it is the same: in every portion of HER works we are



furnished with a rich store, whether we use it or not. Yet how unconscious are many of their existence! comparatively few regard them as they ought; yet fewer still are they who learn the whole of Nature's lore, to whom everything speaks with a living voice of spiritual meaning, directing their thoughts to the eternal realities of which these are the shadows. Seeing then the spiritual instruction which may be derived from her, and the heavenly-mindedness of those who have made her parables their theme, men will do well to lose no portion of figurative teaching, and least of all that portion which will bring them more immediately into communication and contact with the unseen world in the devotions and services of the Church. Moreover, for Christians, who are otherwise well instructed, it is not Symbolism that will lead them astray. Only let them be taught in their study of it to take delight in the spiritual signification, rather than in the manner of expression; in the substance, rather than the shadow; and great will be their gratitude to those who have led them to understand it and make it their own.

Let us, therefore, whose avocation places within our reach the frequent opportunity of introducing and extending the knowledge of Symbolism (even amongst those from whom, in days of old, the study and practical knowledge of it emanated),

strive to show, practically in our own works, whether works of Art can or cannot be made more beautiful and attractive through the use of Symbolism: for this will do more to convince others of the falseness or trueness of it than many inquiries into its nature and origin, and enable them to form a more correct judgment of its real value. And let those whose office it is to minister in spiritual things employ, in their teaching, the lessons to be derived, as well from Symbolism as from other sorts of figurative language, and they will see whether it may not be made a means of arousing the indifferent, and of instilling into the minds of their people many lessons of holiness. For it is reasonable to suppose that such will be the result of the adoption of it, because, in addition to the more immediate advantages which it confers, it will enable the preacher to make such frequent allusions to familiar objects as must necessarily excite the attention of even the most careless. But he who uses Symbolism, for this or for any other purpose, must never forget the great danger of overstraining symbolical interpretations: nor should he ever attempt to force upon others abstruse or doubtful interpretations; much less should he obtrude any peculiarly his own, for some passing train of thought, some particular frame of mind, or some accidental circumstance, will often lead him to

ideas which would not otherwise have occurred to himself, and which, therefore, cannot be expected to approve themselves to others who are not in the same circumstances with himself.

There are persons, it is true, who would set aside the whole argument by saying that for their own parts they cannot see how any one outward thing more than another is fitted to remind a Christian of spiritual privileges and blessings; that he may as easily direct his thoughts to such things without the intervention of any external symbol. But is it not a law of our nature that we should be taught heavenly wisdom through material things, and by the ordinary actions of life? and if through these at all, why should Christian Art—the highest of man's works—be denied her office to impart such teaching? Indeed it is this aim which gives life and spirit to the study and pursuit of Christian Art; it is this which sheds a peculiar charm over that which is looked upon by so many as being necessarily a dry and lifeless occupation, and it is mainly this which constitutes the difference between the cultivation of architecture, painting, and sculpture, as Christian Arts, and as mere Fine Arts.

We have thus seen that Symbolism is rooted in human nature itself and that it has therefore no connection with accidents of time or country. It has no relation, except that of direct opposition,

to the supposed ignorance of ages when it most prevailed. Its dangers are such only as are common to other confessedly good and proper instruments of mental or spiritual edification, and its objections do not apply excepting to the abuse of it. The study of it is, moreover, especially suitable to an age like the present, in which men will not rest contented with mere details, but rightly aim to trace up all things to their highest principles; and if such be the spirit of this age, using that term in its proper sense, then—Symbolism is suited to the Spirit of the Age.

And lastly, if from a careful inquiry into the nature and uses of Symbolism, any one shall on the one hand learn to derive from it half the pleasure which I have derived, or any of the profit which I trust I have gained,—or still more, to use it as a means of making a single sacred building more worthy of its high ends, in regard of constructional or decorative beauty, ritual arrangement or ordering of services;—or if, on the other hand, any one,—either whose love for the beautiful has led him hitherto to delight in Art solely for its own sake, and without regard to its most important uses, or whose dependence upon external aids has induced him hitherto to place an undue value upon them,—shall be brought to look at Art and outward forms in a truer light,—to place less reliance upon the

outward expression than upon the truth expressed, —to seek after the substance rather than catch at a mere shadow ;—my labour, in trying to lead him to a fair and impartial consideration of both sides of the question, will not have been in vain.

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